

AORN PROPOSED POSITION STATEMENT ON RESPONSIBILITY FOR MENTORING

PREAMBLE

The specialty of perioperative nursing is practiced within a setting characterized by rapidly changing technology as well as economic and cultural forces that require continuous adaptation. To meet the needs of this demanding environment, perioperative registered nurses are required to acquire complex knowledge and skills through formal educational programs. However, the demand for perioperative nurses outweighs the supply due to several factors, including increased educational needs and lack of teaching programs to provide this education.

Currently, nursing school enrollments have decreased, and perioperative nursing is not commonly included in core nursing curricula. In addition, the aging of perioperative nurses is having a progressive impact on the number of practicing nurses. Despite these challenges, practicing perioperative registered nurses have the opportunity to encourage interested individuals to enter the nursing profession through formal and informal mentoring activities and behaviors.

The importance of mentoring within nursing is gaining acceptance and support. The Nurse Reinvestment Act of 2002 provides funding to advance nursing education and nursing workforce diversity and to promote mentoring, cultural competencies, and collaborative efforts to increase the involvement of nurses in organizational and clinical decision making.

Perioperative registered nurses entering clinical, management, and leadership roles, as well as student nurses, need a support system, role models, and guidance to advance the practice of perioperative nursing. Perioperative registered nurses are involved in life-long learning to maintain a current body of perioperative knowledge. Professionalism in perioperative nursing is demonstrated by participation in professional organizations, legislative and regulatory initiatives influencing perioperative nursing practice, and active interest in global health care issues affecting the practice of perioperative nursing. Perioperative registered nurses have a responsibility to strengthen and advocate for an environment that promotes career development and leadership and to create an environment where active mentoring is supported and encouraged.

POSITION STATEMENT

AORN believes mentors will work to create a culture that is mutually respectful and inclusive of individual diversity;

AORN believes that perioperative registered nurse mentors will seek to build mutually supportive professional relationships in all areas of practice to facilitate growth and professional development;

AORN believes that perioperative registered nurses will actively seek opportunities to mentor novice perioperative nurses engaged in clinical practice, inexperienced perioperative nurse managers, emerging leaders in the perioperative nursing milieu, as well as students and other persons interested in exploring perioperative nursing as a career; and

AORN believes that the perioperative registered nurse mentor will model professional behavior and demonstrate a commitment to perioperative nursing by participating in professional organizations, supporting practice-related legislative and regulatory initiatives impacting perioperative nurses and nursing, and maintaining an awareness of global health care issues affecting the practice of perioperative nursing.

Original statement adopted by the AORN Board of Directors in February 2001; adopted by the House of Delegates, Dallas, Tex, in March 2001. ❖

Editor's note: An additional Proposed Position Statement, *Allied Health Care Providers in the Perioperative Practice Setting*, will be presented to House of Delegates for discussion at the Second Forum on Wednesday, March 22, 2006. More information on the agenda for the Forums and House of Delegates sessions will be published in the February issue of the AORN Journal and in Congress Resources.